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August 9, 1963

Professor Joshua Lederberg
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Dear Professor Lederberg:

Re: An International Journal on Exobiology

Forgive me for troubling you in a matter on which we would be most grateful to have your advice. It concerns the evaluation of a proposal to publish a new journal on outer space biology. If you would deem it desirable, and provided you can give us of your valuable time, I would naturally be pleased to meet with you at Stanford at your convenience to discuss this proposal in some detail. In the interim, I shall outline the background and development of this idea below.

In a recent discussion with staff members of the California Institute of Technology's JET PROPULSION LABORATORY, -- during which you were credited with the distinction of having coined the term EXOBIOLOGY, -- the thought was expressed that a journal devoted to the biology of outer space, international and interdisciplinary in character, would perhaps be timely and in order. Having a vested interest in this field because of our extensive publishing program in the aerospace sciences, we proceeded to make a preliminary study directed to a few members of the scientific community who we thought would be interested and able to give us an authoritative opinion. The response to our study has been very mixed, from an outright "no" to an enthusiastic "go ahead".

Our enquiry was quite preliminary in that it merely questioned the following:

- (a) Is the idea sound in principle
- (b) Is such a journal needed
- (c) Is the present literature adequately covered and

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disseminated by existing journals.


Although it may be a trifle early and ambitious to devote an entire journal to this topic, it is our own feeling that we should proceed with its establishment, knowing from experience that it takes considerable time to launch such a venture and, furthermore, to establish our interest in a field which will undoubtedly be of great importance to science and mankind in the future.

So that you may get an idea of what your colleagues had to say, I am enclosing copies of the replies which we have so far received. May I ask you to kindly keep these letters confidential, as the opinions expressed were not intended to be made public. The reason I believe it proper to send them on to you is, apart from your eminence, that it would be difficult for you to study the proposal without this pertinent background material.

Should your reply be favorable and you recommend that we proceed with our plans, we would hope that you might consent to chair the Editorial Board.

Many thanks for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Detlev J. Raymond
Editor-in-chief